

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5512
www.energy.ca.gov



May 24, 2012

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE PRELIMINARY STAFF ASSESSMENT FOR THE
HIDDEN HILLS SOLAR ELECTRIC GENERATING SYSTEM, APPLICATION FOR
CERTIFICATION (11-AFC-2)**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Thursday, June 14, 2012

10am – 7pm (or end of discussions)

Pahrump Public Library

701 East Street

Pahrump, NV 89048

WebEx Call-in toll-free number: **1-866-469-3239**

(Access code: **929 367 339**)

(Meeting Password: **Meeting@10**)

&

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

9am – 7pm (or end of discussions)

Home Street Middle School Library

730 Home Street

Bishop, CA 93514

WebEx Call-in toll-free number: **1-866-469-3239**

(Access code: **922 518 173**)

(Meeting Password: **Meeting@9**)

DOCKET

11-AFC-2

DATE MAY 24 2012

RECD. MAY 24 2012

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

This notice is to inform you that the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) has prepared a Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) for the Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System (HHSEGS) Application for Certification (AFC). Additionally, this notice is to inform you of the availability of the PSA, which was published by the Energy Commission on May 24, 2012. The PSA contains the Energy Commission's preliminary engineering, public health, and environmental evaluation of the proposed HHSEGS project.

The Energy Commission staff will hold two public workshops to discuss the PSA and further public participation in the HHSEGS proceeding at the times and dates listed above. Based on the workshop dialogue, written comments received regarding the PSA, and additional information that will be gathered, the Energy Commission staff will revise the PSA where appropriate and issue a Final Staff Assessment (FSA).

PROOF OF SERVICE (REVISED 5/15/12) FILED WITH
ORIGINAL MAILED FROM SACRAMENTO ON 5/24/12

EKS

The Energy Commission encourages public participation in the review of the HHSEGS Application for Certification (11-AFC-2). The public comment period for this PSA is from May 24, 2012 to July 6, 2012. All public comments will be considered by Energy Commission staff for incorporation into the FSA. Written comments on the PSA should be provided to Mike Monasmith, Project Manager, no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, July 6, 2012, at the address on this letterhead or by email to mike.monasmith@energy.ca.gov. Technical or project schedule questions should also be directed to Mr. Monasmith at (916) 654-4894, or by email, or the address above.

Summary of the Proposed Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System

The Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System (HHSEGS) is proposed for development by a wholly owned subsidiary of BrightSource Energy, Inc. (Applicant). As proposed, HHSEGS would be located on approximately 3,277 acres of privately owned land leased in Inyo County, California, adjacent to the Nevada border. The project site is approximately 8 miles south of Pahrump, Nevada, and approximately 45 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada.

As proposed, HHSEGS would comprise two solar fields and associated facilities: the northern solar plant (Solar Plant 1) and the southern solar plant (Solar Plant 2). Each solar plant would generate 270 megawatts (MW) gross (250 MW net), for a total net output of 500 MW. Solar Plant 1 will occupy approximately 1,483 acres (or 2.3 square miles), and Solar Plant 2 will occupy approximately 1,510 acres (or 2.4 square miles). A 103-acre common area would be established on the southeastern corner of the site to accommodate an administration, warehouse, and maintenance complex, an onsite 138 kV switchyard and a natural gas metering station. A temporary construction laydown and parking area on the west side of the proposed project site would temporarily occupy approximately 180 acres.

Groundwater would be drawn daily from six onsite groundwater supply wells that would be drilled and developed to provide raw water for the HHSEGS project; two new wells per power block (primary and backup) and two wells at the administration complex. The wells would supply both solar plants and would be used for the power cycle make-up water, mirror wash water, and other domestic uses. The entire 500-MW net project would require up to 140 acre feet of groundwater per year (an acre foot of water equals 325,851 gallons). The bulk of the electric power produced by the facility would either interconnect via a 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line to a new Tap Substation at the intersection of Tecopa Road¹ and Nevada State Route 160, or, from the Tap Substation, via a 53.7 mile-long, 230kV circuit terminating at the Eldorado substation in Boulder City, Nevada.

A 12- to 16-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline would be required for the project. The gas pipeline would enter the HHSEGS site in the common area where it would connect with an onsite gas metering station. It would exit the HHSEGS site at the California-Nevada border and travel on the Nevada side southeast along the state line, then northeast along Tecopa Road until it crosses under SR 160. From this location a 36-inch line would turn southeast

¹ The road is also called "Tecopa Highway" and "Old Spanish Trail Highway" -- the names are generally used interchangeably.

and continue approximately 26 miles, following the proposed Eldorado Option transmission line corridor, to intersect with the Kern River Gas Transmission (KRG T) pipeline.

Energy Commission Licensing Authority

The Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing and ultimately approving or denying all applications for construction and operation of thermal electric power plants, 50 MW and greater, proposed for construction in California. The Energy Commission's facility certification process carefully examines public health and safety, environmental impacts and engineering aspects of proposed power plants, and all related facilities such as electric transmission lines and natural gas and water pipelines. The Energy Commission is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and produces several environmental and decision documents rather than an Environmental Impact Report.

Summary of the California Energy Commission Staff's Preliminary Findings

Based upon the information provided, discovery achieved and analyses completed to date, with key exceptions described below, staff concluded that the HHSEGS project complies with all laws, ordinances, regulations and standards (LORS), and with the implementation of its recommended mitigation measures, potential environmental impacts of the HHSEGS project will be mitigated to levels of less than significant. Therefore, in all but 6 of the 21 technical sections, the proposed project complies with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The technical disciplines where issues exist (with LORS compliance and/or significant impact determinations/mitigation):

- **Biological Resources:** staff is able to conclude that with implementation of proposed conditions of certification, the project will comply with most laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS), and most direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts would be avoided, minimized, or mitigated to less than significant levels. However, staff considers there to be a number of unresolved issues that require resolution or further clarification so that staff can complete the Final Staff Assessment and come to final conclusions, including: uncertainty of project features; potential regulatory conflicts; analysis of avian impacts from solar flux and reflectance; additions to Desert Kit Fox, American Badger and Burrowing Owl conditions of certification; ongoing surveys for special-status plants; and, field verification of state waters and desert wash plant communities.
- **Land Use:** staff has determined that the proposed project would not be consistent with applicable County of Inyo laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) pertaining to land use planning. Staff has further determined that the proposed project's conflict with such plans, policies and regulations of Inyo County would result in a significant impact under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.
- **Socioeconomics and Worker Safety / Fire Protection:** Due to the absence of comments to date from Inyo County and Southern Inyo Fire Protection District, review of the Site Security and Fire Risk Assessment plans submitted by the applicant, certain components of these two sections' analyses related to Law Enforcement and

Emergency Services impacts were left incomplete, and therefore impacts were *undetermined* in the conclusion of these two PSA sections.

- **Transmission System Engineering (TSE):** additional information is necessary and required in regard to specific issues related to inconsistencies between the California Independent System Operator's Phase I and II studies and the Hidden Hills AFC's plans for electrical transmission. Accordingly, staff is *undetermined* regarding environmental impacts pending an expected Navigant study on the electrical transmission system for the Valley Electric Association Hidden Hills Transmission Project, which is the subject of an existing Bureau of Land Management environmental review process, for which HHSEGS is considered a "connected action".
- **Visual Resources:** staff concludes that the proposed project, after implementing all recommended conditions of certification, would still have significant and unavoidable adverse *direct* and *cumulative* visual impacts. Staff also concludes that the project would not be consistent with several applicable goals and policies of the Inyo County General Plan.

Public Resources, Contact Information and Additional Sources for Information

If you desire information on how to participate in the Energy Commission's review of the proposed project, please contact Jennifer Jennings, the Energy Commission's Public Adviser, at (916) 653-5898 or toll free in California at (800) 822-6228, or by email at: publicadviser@energy.ca.gov. To request special accommodations for those persons with disabilities, please contact Lourdes Quiroz, the Energy Commission's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer at lquiroz@energy.ca.gov or by telephone (916) 654-5146. For those persons with limited English knowledge, request interpreter services by contacting the Project Manager, Mike Monasmith.

The status of the project, copies of notices and other relevant documents are also available on the Energy Commission's web site: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/hiddenhills/index.html>. News media inquiries should be directed to Assistant Director, Adam Gottlieb, at (916) 654-4989, or by email at: mediaoffice@energy.ca.gov.

Paper copies of the PSA will be available for review at the following local libraries:

Pahrump Community Library
701 East Street
Pahrump, NV 89048

Inyo County Library
168 North Edwards Street
Independence, CA 93626

Bishop Branch Library
210 Academy Street
Bishop, CA 93514

Inyo County Library
410 Hot Springs Rd
Tecopa, CA 92389

Barstow Branch Library
304 E Buena Vista Street
Barstow, CA 92311-2806

Las Vegas Library
833 Las Vegas Blvd North
Las Vegas, NV 89101

The PSA will also be available at the Energy Commission's Library in Sacramento, the California State Library in Sacramento, and at California public libraries in Eureka, Fresno, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego². In addition, copies will be distributed to those public agencies that would normally have jurisdiction except for the Energy Commission's exclusive authority to certify sites and related facilities.

If you would like a paper copy or CD of the PSA, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to the California Energy Commission, attention: Mike Monasmith, Project Manager, or by e-mail at mike.monasmith@energy.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Date: _____

ROGER E. JOHNSON, Deputy Director
Siting, Transmission and Environmental
Protection Division

² For library addresses and/or contact information please contact Project Manager Mike Monasmith at 916-654-4894.

Please send me a paper copy / CD (please circle one) of the California Energy Commission staff's Preliminary Staff Assessment for the Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System (HHSEGS) Application for Certification (11-AFC-2).

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

FOLD HERE

California Energy Commission
Attention: Mike Monasmith
1516 Ninth Street, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

FOLD HERE

Staple or Tape closed

PSA WORKSHOP
Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System

Thursday, June 14, 2012

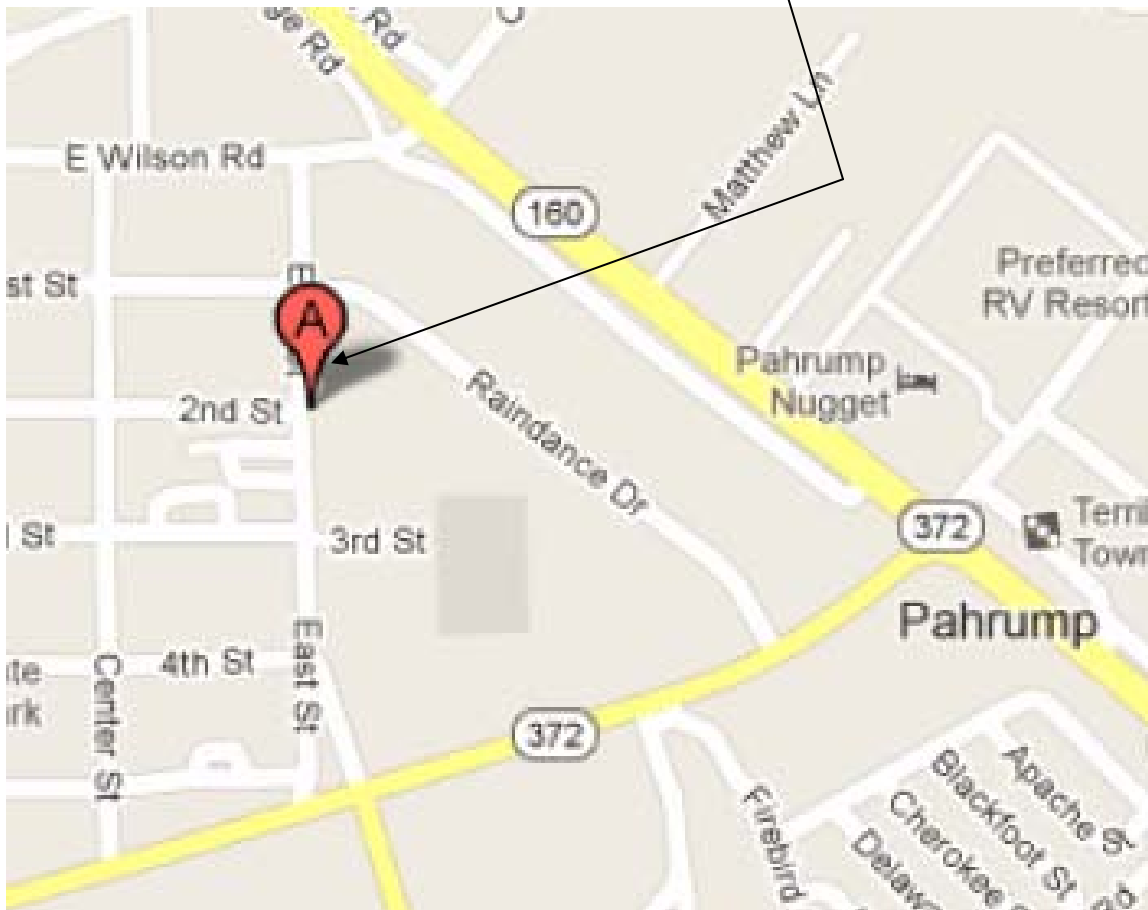
10am – 7pm (or end of discussions)

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701 East Street
Pahrump, NV 89048
(wheelchair assessable)



PSA WORKSHOP
Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

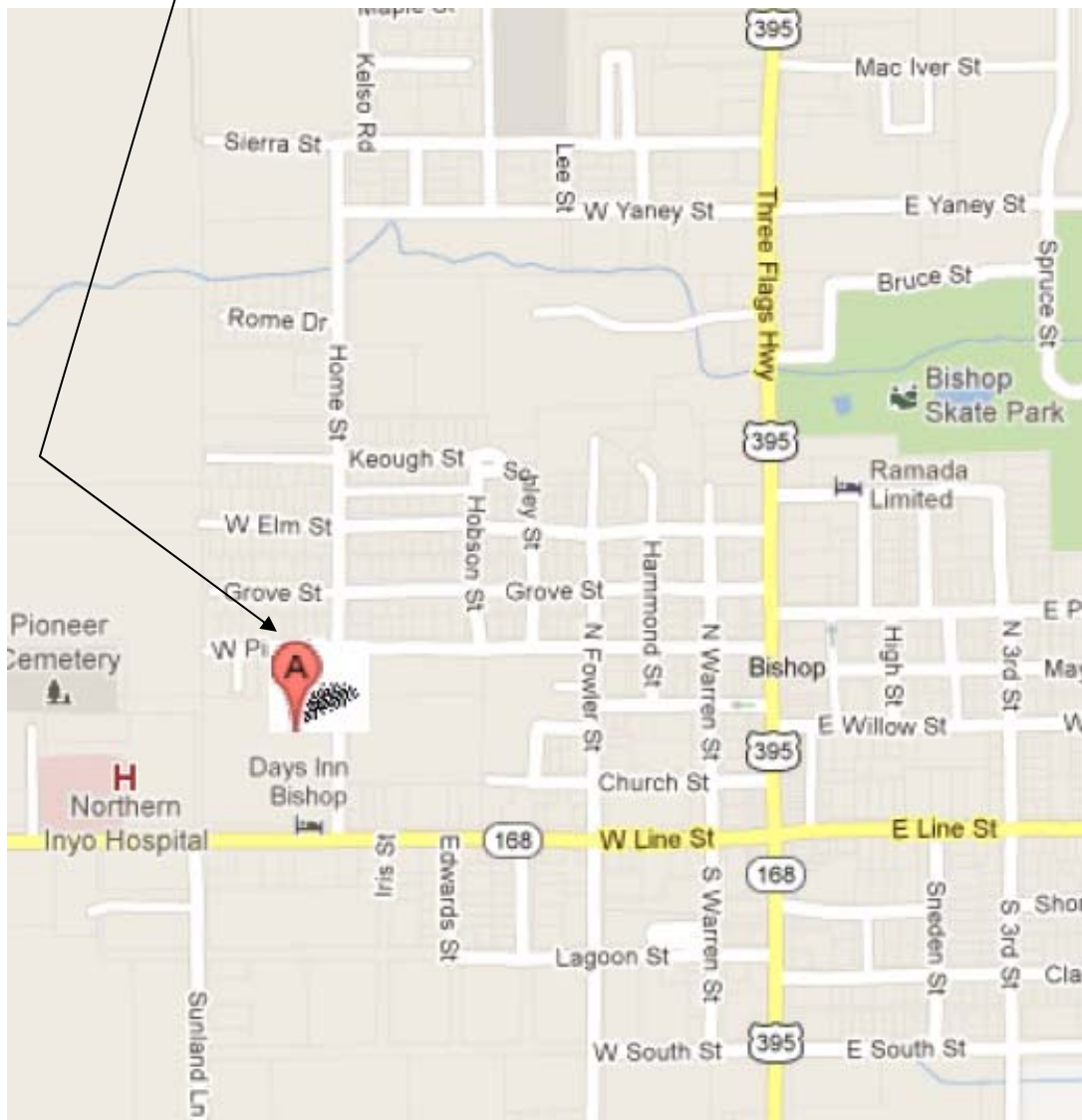
9am – 8pm *(or end of discussions)*

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(Meeting Password: **Meeting@9**)

Home Street Middle School Library
730 Home Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(760) 872-1036



REMOTE ATTENDANCE IN THE
Hidden Hills PSA Workshop on June 14, 2012

You may participate in this Workshop through WebEx, the Energy Commission's online meeting service. Presentations will appear on your computer screen, and you may listen to audio via your computer or telephone. Please be aware that the meeting may be recorded.

1. COMPUTER LOG-ON WITH A DIRECT PHONE NUMBER:

- Please go to <https://energy.webex.com> and enter: **929 367 339**
- When prompted, enter your information and **Meeting@10**

After you login, a prompt will appear on-screen for you to provide **your** phone number.

In the **Number box**, type your area code and phone number and click OK.

You will receive a call back on your phone for the audio portion of the meeting.

2. COMPUTER LOG-ON FOR CALLERS WITH AN EXTENSION PHONE NUMBER, ETC:

- Please go to <https://energy.webex.com> and enter: **929 367 339** and **Meeting@10**
- After you login, a prompt will ask for your phone number. Click "**CANCEL.**"
- Instead call **1-866-469-3239**. When prompted, enter: **929 367 339** and your unique Attendee ID number which is listed in the top left area of your computer screen after you login.

3. TELEPHONE ONLY (NO COMPUTER ACCESS):

- Call **1-866-469-3239** and when prompted enter: **929 367 339**

If you have difficulty joining the meeting, please call the WebEx Technical Support number at 1-866-229-3239. To see if your computer is compatible, visit [<http://support.webex.com/support/systemrequirements.html>]. Please be aware that the meeting's WebEx audio and on-screen activity may be recorded.

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**BEFORE THE ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
1516 NINTH STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
1-800-822-6228 – WWW.ENERGY.CA.GOV**

**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION
FOR THE *HIDDEN HILLS SOLAR ELECTRIC
GENERATING SYSTEM***

DOCKET NO. 11-AFC-02

PROOF OF SERVICE
(Revised 5/15/2012)

APPLICANT

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INTERVENORS

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jon@zellhoefer.info

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e-mail service preferred
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Old Spanish Trail Association
Jack Prichett
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Venice, CA 90291
jackprichett@ca.rr.com

INTERVENORS (con't.)

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3605 Silver Sand Court
N. Las Vegas, NV 89032
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sacredintent@centurylink.net

INTERESTED AGENCIES

California ISO
e-recipient@caiso.com

Great Basin Unified APCD
Duane Ono
Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer
157 Short Street
Bishop, CA 93514
dono@gbuapcd.org

County of Inyo
Dana Crom
Deputy County Counsel
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Independence, CA 93526
dcrom@inyocounty.us

Nye County
Lorinda A. Wichman, Chairman
Board of County Supervisors
P.O. Box 153
Tonopah, NV 89049
lawichman@gmail.com

Nye County Water District
L. Darrel Lacy
Interim General Manager
2101 E. Calvada Boulevard
Suite 100
Pahrump, NV 89048
llacy@co.nye.nv.us

*indicates change

INTERESTED AGENCIES (con't.)

National Park Service
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Cultural Resources Specialist
National Trails Intermountain
Region
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**ENERGY COMMISSION –
DECISIONMAKERS**

KAREN DOUGLAS
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e-mail service preferred
karen.douglas@energy.ca.gov

CARLA PETERMAN
Commissioner and Associate Member
carla.peterman@energy.ca.gov

Ken Celli
Hearing Adviser
ken.celli@energy.ca.gov

Galen Lemei
Advisor to Presiding Member
e-mail service preferred
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Jim Bartridge
Advisor to Associate Member
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**ENERGY COMMISSION –
STAFF**

Mike Monasmith
Senior Project Manager
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Richard Ratliff
Staff Counsel IV
dick.ratliff@energy.ca.gov

**ENERGY COMMISSION –
PUBLIC ADVISER**

Jennifer Jennings
Public Adviser's Office
e-mail service preferred
publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us

DECLARATION OF SERVICE

I, Elizabeth Stewart, declare that on May 24, 2012, I served and filed copies of the attached **Notice of Availability of the Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System, Preliminary Staff Assessment (11-AFC-02)**, dated May 24, 2012. This document is accompanied by the most recent Proof of Service list, located on the web page for this project at: www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/hiddenhills/index.html.

The document has been sent to the other parties in this proceeding (as shown on the Proof of Service list) and to the Commission's Docket Unit or Chief Counsel, as appropriate, in the following manner:

(Check all that Apply)

For service to all other parties:

- X Served electronically to all e-mail addresses on the Proof of Service list;
- X Served by delivering on this date, either personally, or for mailing with the U.S. Postal Service with first-class postage thereon fully prepaid, to the name and address of the person served, for mailing that same day in the ordinary course of business; that the envelope was sealed and placed for collection and mailing on that date to those addresses **NOT** marked "e-mail preferred."

AND

For filing with the Docket Unit at the Energy Commission:

- X by sending an electronic copy to the e-mail address below (preferred method); **OR**
- by depositing an original and 12 paper copies in the mail with the U.S. Postal Service with first class postage thereon fully prepaid, as follows:

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION – DOCKET UNIT
Attn: Docket No. 11-AFC-2
1516 Ninth Street, MS-4
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512
docket@energy.ca.gov

OR, if filing a Petition for Reconsideration of Decision or Order pursuant to Title 20, § 1720:

- Served by delivering on this date one electronic copy by e-mail, and an original paper copy to the Chief Counsel at the following address, either personally, or for mailing with the U.S. Postal Service with first class postage thereon fully prepaid:

California Energy Commission
Michael J. Levy, Chief Counsel
1516 Ninth Street MS-14
Sacramento, CA 95814
michael.levy@energy.ca.gov

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct, that I am employed in the county where this mailing occurred, and that I am over the age of 18 years and not a party to the proceeding.

Original signed by
Elizabeth Stewart
Project Assistant